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LETTER DATED 13 AUGUST 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 12 August 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the attempts of the United States Administration to defame Iraq in order to prolong the embargo that has been maintained against the country for the past seven years.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 12 August 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to call your attention to the attempts of the United States Administration to defame Iraq and to create incidents in order to be able to claim that Iraq is violating the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The purpose of these attempts on the part of the United States is to prolong the embargo that has been maintained against Iraq for the past seven years.

The 31 July 1997 message to Congress from United States President Clinton concerning what he calls "the national emergency with respect to Iraq" contains in its third paragraph allegations to the effect that Iraq tried to obtain zirconium ingots from the United States of America in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and the Iraqi Sanctions Regulations (ISR). I here quote a paragraph from that message:

> "On July 10, 1995, an indictment was brought against three United States citizens in the Eastern District of New York for conspiracy in a case involving the attempted exportation and transshipment to Iraq of zirconium ingots in violation of the IEEPA and the ISR. The intended use of the merchandise was the manufacture of cladding for radioactive materials to be used in nuclear reactors. The case was the culmination of a successful undercover operation conducted by agents of the United States Customs Service in New York in cooperation with the Office of Foreign Assets Control and the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. On February 6, 1997, one of the defendants pled guilty to a 10-count criminal indictment including conspiracy to violate the Iraqi Sanctions and the IEEPA. The trial of the remaining defendants is ongoing."

In order to present facts that will refute the allegations made in the message, I should like to refer to information published by American and other news media, including The New York Times in its issue for 9 June 1995, to the effect that United States Government agents posed as Iraqi Foreign Ministry officials in order to entrap three suspected arms dealers who tried to export eight tons of zirconium in violation of the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations. The New York Times states as follows:

> "Three men from Queens and Long Island, apparently in collusion with a Russian general, smuggled nearly eight tons of material used in nuclear reactors from a military stockpile in Ukraine, stored most of it in a warehouse in Queens and spread the word that they would sell it to the highest bidder, Federal officials said yesterday.
>
> "The men were arrested after a yearlong sting operation in which United States Customs agents posed as Iraqi Foreign Ministry officials and European arms dealers planning to buy the zirconium, a non-radioactive material that is useful in nuclear fission. They are charged with trying

to export the zirconium illegally to Iraq, in violation of the United Nations sanctions against Iraq, augmented by American law, which prohibit all trade with Iraq except for humanitarian items."

This deliberate affront to Iraq's reputation, cited as evidence by the United States President and used in a message to Congress, only confirms the deception and distortion of facts in which the United States Administration engages against Iraq in order to perpetuate the unjust embargo.

If this is the true nature of the United States policy against Iraq, which has gone to such an extreme that the President of the United States of America contributes to it through the messages he sends to the United States Congress, then one has to wonder how many times over the past seven years the United States Administration has contrived allegations and lies for submission to the Security Council and other bodies in order to unleash against Iraq more fabricated crises. They must indeed have been very numerous.

Iraq has on dozens of occasions called attention to this state of affairs, one that is of unparalleled clarity in the present case. The United States President himself, in a message to the Congress of the United States, relates a fabricated story that has the purpose of raising an accusation against Iraq in order to justify the maintenance of the embargo when it is merely a matter of an entrapment operation whose protagonists are United States Government agents posing as Iraqi Foreign Ministry officials. The United States President says in his message, however, that it was "a successful undercover operation" without regard for the fact that this constitutes deception of the Congress of the United States and of American public opinion.

Let me assure you once again that Iraq denies any connection or association with the false claims and allegations made in President Clinton's message and that it places responsibility squarely on the United States Administration. That Administration pursues such a policy in order to impugn Iraq's reputation and cast doubt on its fulfilment of the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly those relating to the weapons prohibited under section C of resolution 687 (1991).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq